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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP:MBLONG
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [YM](#)
SUBJECT: SALEH AND CRONIES DRAW FIRE FROM A BROADENING
SWATH OF ROYG CRITICS
Classified By: Ambassador Stephen A. Seche for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)
Summary

¶1. (C) As political tension mounts in Yemen, a broadening cross-section of Embassy interlocutors is blaming President Saleh personally for the country's woes. This increasing distrust of Saleh bodes poorly for his ability to draw effectively on the power base that traditionally has enabled him to weather political crises. End Summary
Pointing the Finger at Saleh

¶2. (S) Against a backdrop of continuing unrest in Yemen's south, Embassy interlocutors, even those in the ruling party, are increasingly placing blame for the southern unrest and the nation's other problems squarely on the doorstep of President Saleh. Sheikh Mohamed Naji al-Shaif of the Bakil confederation said to the Ambassador on May 26, "who caused the southern call for independence? Saleh." Assistant Secretary General of the opposition Islah Party told POL/E Chief on May 19 that Saleh's rule is responsible for the unrest in the country. On May 18, Mohamed Abulahoum, a member of the ruling General People's Congress (GPC) General Committee, told POL/E Chief that Saleh is no longer capable of bringing about needed reforms.
Nepotism, Ahmed Ali, and the Cult of Personality

¶3. (S) The presence of close members of the President's family in senior leadership positions is a primary irritant for the President's detractors. GPC Parliamentarian Ali al-Imrani complained to POL/E Chief on May 25, "His (Saleh's) sons and his nephews who are like his sons are running everything. He has more children, what happens when they get older? There will be no positions for anyone else." Shaif told the Ambassador that if Saleh will not abdicate his position then he should "say goodbye to (remove from power) his corrupt generals and his family members."

¶4. (S) Of particular concern is presidential son Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh, head of Yemen's Special Operations Force and Republican Guard. It is generally believed that Saleh is grooming him to be the next president. Imrani told POL/E Chief, "if there is to be any serious reform, Saleh must first announce that his son will not replace him. We are not a monarchy. I have no objection to Ahmed Ali winning the presidency but he must not inherit it." Adeni businessmen Adnan al-Kaff and Ahmed Shukri and Syrian businessman working in Mukalla Nasser Musphi have all told representatives of post's force protection detachment that southerners will never support Ahmed Ali as a president. Shaif told the Ambassador that Saleh "must get rid of Ahmed Ali."

¶5. (C) Beyond pure nepotism, presidential critics complain that Saleh has warped Yemen's institutions to amass power to himself. Imrani complained that the GPC "is not even a real political party. It's just a tool to do Saleh's will." When asked about the effectiveness of Yemen's Parliament, Council of Ministers and judiciary, Yassin Saeed Noman, Secretary General of the opposition Yemeni Socialist Party, said, "they have no power. They are chosen on the basis of loyalty, not loyalty to the state or the homeland -- loyalty to one man

(Saleh). This makes them just tools of the President."

Comment

¶6. (C) It is unsurprising in a state dominated by a strong leader that those unhappy with their situation blame that individual. The increasingly open criticism of the president and his inner circle in Yemen bodes poorly for the ability of the Saleh regime to regain the people's trust. This, in turn, bodes poorly for the country's ability to stabilize itself in the near term. End Comment.

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